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ABSTRACT

To have an impact in the adult education field, adult educators must improve their competencies through professional development. Although adult education academic programs exist, many agencies hiring adult educators do not require this background and frequently are unaware that the field exists. The Coalition of Adult Education Organizations has appointed a committee to study and take action in the professional development field. Professional development is needed for those preparing to enter the field, those entering with insufficient preparation, those requiring training to continue working effectively, and those preparing for professionally related roles. Development programs can improve adult educators' competencies, such as the ability to relate theory to practice. Adult educators should be involved in assessing their own needs, which are transformed into agency, sponsor, and individual objectives that influence the development of learning opportunities. These opportunities can involve many types of programs, activities, and resources which may be part of a diploma, research, or professional development program. To facilitate program and productivity evaluation, performance objectives must be clearly stated. Adult education agencies should have professional development policies and should indicate competencies required for higher positions. Those sponsoring professional development must recognize that financial support and recognition are important motivational factors. (A Spanish translation of this paper is available--see note.) (CSS)

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RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS OF ADULTS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS OF ADULTS

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February 21, 1978

Dear Colleague:

The Association for Continuing Higher Education held its 39th Annual Meeting on November 6-9, 1977, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The conference theme focused upon professional development for people in the field of continuing education.

The attached paper was prepared for the conference by Dr. Alexander N. Charters, Professor of Education at Syracuse University. Dr. Charters was asked by the ACHE Program Committee to provide the basic concept of development of educators of adults as background preparation for the conference. The paper was sent to conference preregistrants and was available at the Montreal meeting in both English and Spanish languages. The Spanish translation was prepared for a group of persons attending the meeting from South America.

As ACHE President at the time of the meeting in Montreal, I want to thank Dr. Charters again for his contribution to the program. Because of space restrictions this important paper will not be included in the 1977 Proceedings of the Association.

Sincerely,

William D. Barton

William D. Barton
Associate Dean

WDB:bb

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS OF ADULTS

by DR. ALEXANDER N. CHARTERS
PROFESSOR OF ADULT EDUCATION
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Adult education can realize its total impact only through the dedicated efforts of able educators of adults. They are the leaders called upon to develop and to implement policy to meet the challenge not only for more education, but also for new alternative learning patterns for all adults. We are challenged to provide more appropriate learning opportunities for those now participating in adult education and to reach the great mass of people currently uneducated.

Further education will assuredly not solve all the problems of educators of adults, but it will help just as it has in other areas, such as law and health related fields. It is a case of applying what is known about the education of adults to the area of adult education itself. Educators of adults are a part of their own clientele and should view their own learning in the context of lifelong learning.

Educators frequently engage in controversy about adult education--its role as an area of education, a field of study, a discipline, or a profession. Since there is some theory and practice, as well as a considerable number of persons identified with the education of adults, it may be accepted that there is at least a field of study widely recognized as adult education.

The persons who are engaged in the adult education enterprise are the educators of adults. It is noted however that they are not always identified as educators of adults. Nevertheless they all have the same roles and responsibilities. Most of them recognize the need for their own further development, often referred to as

in-plant, on-the-job, in-service, staff development, training, professional development, or continuing education. This statement uses the phrase "professional development." The term does not necessarily imply that adult education is a profession, but it does assume that educators of adults possess varying degrees of common characteristics related to a profession. Fundamental to this statement is the recognition that in adult education there is some theory, perhaps not yet systemized; there is an area of practice identified; a commitment to the education of adults exists; a desire to profess the cause of adult education is evident; a sense of mission, public service, or ethics is involved; educators of adults identify personally and vocationally with each other as colleagues; and they participate in organizations and associations established to promote the cause of adult education. It is also recognized that there are times when the personal and professional competencies and characteristics of an educator of adults are inseparable. This statement however, is intended to provide an overview of many of the issues and aspects of the professional development of educators of adults. It may provide a basis for in-depth consideration of specific items.

Who Are the Educators of Adults?

Educators of adults may be grouped or typed as follows:

Teachers - instructors - facilitators

Trainers - trainers of trainers

Professors

Program Administrators and other administrators - directors - deans

Research workers

Support personnel - counselors - librarians - business officers - promotors - media experts - evaluators - communicators - planners - technicians

Supervisors

Sponsors - executive directors - presidents - individuals

Board members

Legislators

Policy makers

The range of the educators of adults is comprehensive and includes all those persons who are involved at some level in the decision-making process concerning policy and/or practice of adult education. It includes those persons who may be at an advanced policy level through a continuim to those persons working on specific aspects. The educators may be paid for their services or they may be volunteers, but this factor is not relative to either the quality or level of performance. They may be operating at the state, local, national, or international level, or perhaps at more than one level of an adult education agency. They may be involved in a given agency for a long period of time, or for just a year or two. In many cases, the rate of turnover in the field is substantial, which may indicate little commitment of the educators or that their preparation was insufficient, or both. The broad spectrum of educators also indicates that their involvement in adult education may be career-oriented or task-oriented, and their expectations of professional development will be different. Accordingly a professional development program must be multi-faceted and should be considered not as one program for all, but as many alternative programs. As with all learning, professional development is basically an individual enterprise.

The Status of Professional Development in Adult Education

Some of the characteristics and competencies necessary for, or most likely to indicate, successful performance in the specific role assumed by educators of adults may appropriately be obtained before entry into the field. With the possible exception of colleges and universities there is little evidence to indicate that the study of adult education is required or even suggested by employers or other persons for entry into the adult education job market. Likewise few references to adult education are found in job descriptions, contracts or letters of appointment, advertisements, and other public statements. It is evident from the literature and observation that very few agencies or organizations have any public policy about continuing professional development of their employees.

It follows that adult education is not required, nor even designated, as desirable for continuing employment after entry into the field. These observations do not mean that completion of a formal curriculm program should be required for employment in adult education agencies. The agencies themselves, however, are often not aware of a recognized field of adult education that might be studied to complement specific practice. This study may or may not lead to degrees or other types of recognition. One may well wonder how many educators of adults make reference to evidence of their own continuing education as part of an annual report or application for a new position.

The present status of professional development for educators of adults may be more advanced than this statement implies. There is of course considerable activity by individual educators of adults but it is often in an informal spasmodic way without much planning. It is encouraging to note that the Coalition of Adult Education Organizations and other national organizations have appointed committees to study and take action in the field of professional development. Other organizations and associations are likewise giving increasing attention to this area. Many adult education agencies also have professional development programs of varying intensity. It is evident that most educators of adults are not involved in their continuing professional development. As with all learning, the initiative must come from the learner; in this case the educator of adults.

Stages in Professional Development of educators of Adults

The needs for continuing professional education of educators of adults may be viewed in four stages. First is a concern for the education of those persons preparing to enter the field of adult education. These persons usually have clear, though not always well-defined goals and proceed to prepare themselves in colleges and universities, and other ways for a career in adult education. Second is a concern for the education of those persons who enter

the field without specific preparation to function effectively in their present job or role in adult education. These persons require orientation to the field of adult education and to the particular agency and role to which they have been assigned. Third, all educators of adults require continuing education in order to work effectively to achieve the designated objectives now before them, as well as to prepare for new and changing position and responsibilities either within the agency or elsewhere in the field of adult education. Fourth, the educators of adults, and particularly the career-oriented people, should be preparing for professionally related roles for after professional retirement and for their own continuing education after retirement. The various items discussed in this statement are generally applicable to each of the four states. Priority should be given to the third state, i.e., the continuing education of the educators of adults who are now on the job. This priority is assigned because of the sheer numbers of people to be reached and because it is the stage which can have the most immediate and greatest impact on the field.

Background and Experiences of the Educators of Adults

The breadth of the spectrum of clientele also indicates that the assessment of need must be broadly based. As each of the topics in this statement is discussed, it should be related to the particular type and stage of educators of adults.

Educators of adults enter the field with varying backgrounds and experiences. Some of the experiences may be directly related to the field and others may be transferable to their new roles in adult education. This diverse range in people should be regarded as a rich resource for adult education when it is effectively utilized. In all cases, it requires building on the past and projecting into the future.

The educators of adults have varying degrees of competency and in different areas. For example, some persons may have developed a

beginning knowledge of counseling, but may have developed advanced skills in budgeting, or vice versa. Individuals may be new to the field of adult education but not to particular functions. It may be useful in their professional development programs to consider individuals in terms of their specific competencies rather than to group them in such general categories as: new entries into the field or old-timers. All need to continue their learning.

Purposes of Professional Development Programs

Based on the assumption that all educators of adults should continue their learning in terms of professional development, some identifiable tasks to be considered in a professional development program as related to the four stages are:

1. Assisting educators of adults to develop further the appropriate competencies and characteristics.
2. Developing further all educators of adults in order to relate theory to practice.
3. Developing all educators of adults as self-directed persons and as decision-makers.
4. Continuing to satisfy the thirst of educators of adults for innovations and developments in theory, research and practice.

The purposes or objectives of a professional development program are usually stated in terms of the individuals, the employer, the sponsor, professional associations or other individuals or organizations that may be involved. Essentially, however, the basic person to be considered is the learner -- the educators of adults. Objectives of these persons have been stated generally, but should be defined more specifically and related to the clientele to be served. The most effective way to accomplish the goals is to develop both a short-term and a long-term plan for professional development. The design or plan should be precise, yet flexible enough to accommodate change resulting from new trends in the field of adult education and/or from changes in the objectives and situations of

the educators themselves. The individual educators of adults may require some guidance in developing and stating a professional development program, even a self-directed one.

Some Prescriptions for Professional Development

Some basic considerations in professional development are: a professional development program should be viewed as part of the total life style of the individual and thus linked with personal aspects that need to be interwoven into a self-actualizing attitude; the program should be self-directed, although it is realized that there are strong other-directed pressures which may help or inhibit the individual; the program should reside in the control of the learner and thereby facilitate control over his own life and destiny. In addition, it is sometimes useful to have a mentor, a colleague or a peer with whom one can explore the activities and implications of a professional development program.

Moreover, a professional development program should permit the learner to choose from a variety of alternatives in order to achieve the objectives; it should have an element of continuity and sequence, and thus use the resources of previous experiences; it should be continuous over the years of involvement in the field; it should recognize priorities which vary according to stages in the life span; it should be designed in such a manner that it may be evaluated by the learner and others in terms of acceptable standards; should also be made known to the persons who may be concerned.

Role of an Agency or Sponsor

While the focus of the professional development program is the educator of adults, it may be enhanced or facilitated by assistance of the adult education agency or sponsor with whom the individual holds an appointment or has an association. Goals of these agencies do go beyond that of having self-fulfilled employees or volunteers, e.g., to make money or furnish a service. It is usually to the advantage of an agency to offer a professional development program in

order that the purpose of the agency may be realized. Professional development programs are provided by diverse organizations such as government, foundations, and proprietary institutions. It is of course an optimal situation when the opportunities for professional development offered by an agency or other sponsor coincide with the individualized professional development programs of the educators of adults.

It is useful for the organizer, planner or initiator - whether sponsor or individual - to state the policy and procedures of a professional development program in writing, thus enabling the program to be viewed in clear and precise terms. It also indicates a commitment to the idea as incorporated in the statement of policy. The policy should be complemented by procedures for implementation so that people have access to the learning opportunities as enumerated. It follows then that professional development should be part of the personnel policies and procedures of an agency.

A common form of professional development program for educators of adults is that of upgrading through degree programs. Although individual cases involved may be significant, they add up to a small section of the clientele to be served. Indeed in many ways this emphasis on degree programs is inconsistent with the mainstream idea of continuing professional education which is generally not degree oriented.

The Needs and Nature of Professional Development Programs

An initial task in a professional development program, whether individually or organizationally oriented, is an assessment of needs. It is the basis of the objectives and the resulting pattern of activities and evaluation.

The processes and procedures for identifying and assessing needs of educators of adults do not differ basically from those used in other fields. A detailed list of such procedures will not be stated here,

but a few general suggestions may be in order:

The first is that the clientele, i.e., the educators of adults, who are going to participate, should be involved in the planning and other aspects of the professional development program. As in other areas, there may be a tendency for the director or other authority figure to make the decisions. However, the director himself is often an educator of adults, and in a sense is both organizer and client.

Second, because the tasks and roles of educators of adults are constantly changing, it is necessary to continually reassess needs to identify new competencies, to modify others and to discard still others.

Third, there is a continuing movement of clientele in and out of the field. It may add vitality to the field and it also heightens the need for professional development. Some persons enter the profession with regular short or long term continuing appointment, while others may be designated for a given term or may transfer out of the field. Accordingly, there are new entries being appointed who are continuously available as additions to the on-going clientele, all of whom require professional development programs.

Fourth, the range of clientele from part-time, volunteer, and minimally qualified board members to full-time, paid, career, and qualified specialists implies a comprehensive range of competencies and characteristics to be considered in a professional development program.

Fifth, the dynamic quality of adult education is reflected in increasing numbers of participants, in objectives, and in numbers of agencies involved. This often encourages flexibility, creativity and innovation, often with a sense of mission to develop alternative learning opportunities for adults.

Sixth, while the number of job descriptions for positions for educators of adults is limited, these descriptions suggest areas for professional development programs. Partly as a result of affirmative action and equal opportunity specifications, a broadened system of position-classifications has become necessary. Job descriptions usually indicate the qualifications required for entry into a position and the basic requirements for continuing effectiveness in it. As part of a career ladder plan, a schedule of job descriptions will indicate the characteristics and competencies required for higher and/or better positions in an agency.

Seventh, because the field is somewhat volatile a considerable flexibility is present. These factors could lead to instability and thus attention must be given to the identification of competencies and characteristics that give some stability to the professional development program.

The literature concerning the needs related to characteristics and competencies of educators of adults may be examined, with these reminders as a guide. Input may also be obtained from theory, practice, and experience. Needs may also be identified from various projects related to the many types of educators of adults at their particular stage in the professional development process. These may be designated or grouped in many ways such as: tasks, problems; competencies; general or liberal; professional; job related; knowledge base; skills and abilities and other types of behavior and attitudes.

Some characteristics and competencies necessary and/or desirable may be common for all educators of adults. Other competencies and characteristics are related to particular roles, tasks or stages. For example, in addition to characteristics and competencies of an educator of adults an individual may require the specific ones related to one or more of the vocations, professions or fields. The educator may also require special characteristics and competencies within the field of adult education such as counseling or

public relations. The nature and extent of each of them will vary for each individual and for the role each assumes in the field.

The identified needs should then be assessed and priorities established with appropriate involvement of the many persons concerned with the decision making.

The selected needs are then transformed or translated into objectives for the agency, sponsor, and individual.

Patterns of Professional Development Programs

Some professional development programs may be oriented to a career ladder or to the field of adult education in general. While the career ladder in adult education is not always clear, individuals frequently are able, through observation and discussion, to identify patterns that are to some extent promising guides for planning. An informal network may act as a minimum system or plan. The patterns may be identifiable from a first placement in the field, through the whole span of the career, including its final phases, and during retirement.

For educators of adults to be involved in professional development, they must identify with one or more of the objectives selected for realizing their particular career needs.

Before participating, learning opportunities must be identified and assessed in relation to the selected objectives. Next, it must be determined if the opportunities are accessible in terms of such factors as time, location, and cost. At present, information concerning professional development programs is not readily available and the dissemination process is random, even haphazard. Additional programs and activities may be required to ensure further the access to learning opportunities. It should be recognized that an important factor in achieving objectives is the ability of educators of adults to use and benefit from the resources and learning

opportunities available to them.

Professional development programs may be viewed in one or more patterns:

a. There are the traditional certificate and/or diploma programs in adult education at colleges and universities and the research activities in adult education, primarily at universities. Many persons who enter the field of adult education have received training in a closely related and sometimes not particularly related field. Many graduate programs in adult education have been instituted, particularly during the past three decades. These programs have assisted in preparing a substantial number of educators of adults for entry into the field. In some cases, people who have entered and have been in practice may enroll in the graduate programs for further part-time or full-time study. Graduate degrees are important as a recognition of achievement, but they also provide a basis in terms of qualifications and status with professionals, a basis for comparison in other fields.

b. Closely linked to the graduate programs is research in adult education, conducted primarily by professors and graduate students to whom research is an important factor in their own professional development. Significant research for adult education has also been conducted in related fields such as psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, and sociology. The effective utilization of research for professional development - except for the researchers themselves -- requires more effective bridging between researchers and educators of adults.

c. In addition to graduate programs and research in colleges and universities, a number or programs and activities are available for professional development. These programs and activities are usually most appropriate to those educators of adults who are already engaged in the field. They vary in such terms as purposes, cost, length and restrictions on participation. The only pre-requisite should be an informal one to ensure benefit for the time and effort of the participant.

Types of Programs, Activities and Resources

1. Conferences, seminars and workshops - sponsored by adult education associations and organizations or adult education-related associations. Scope - local, state, regional, national, international.
2. Internships in a similar or related agency.
3. Staff exchanges between two agencies. The exchange periods may or may not be at the same time, and may or may not be of persons in the same position.
4. Visitations. The visit may be in the form of a guest lecture, or on a one-to-one basis. Visits may be made to programs and seminars at other agencies. These may involve both profit and non-profit agencies.
5. Leaves of absence. Leaves may be granted for specific projects or for general reasons; a short version of a leave is to give time off on a regular basis to participate in a program.
6. Resource centers. Centers may be in the form of a staff library or documentation center for print and/or non-print materials. In some cases, materials may be acquired and distributed to staff members. Resources are varied and include human and physical types.
7. Information systems. ERIC clearinghouses, abstracting services and other systems are available in readily accessible places.
8. Retreats. Two or three-day meetings away from the job provide an opportunity to discuss common concerns and develop morale.
9. Orientation for new appointees. Orientation of new appointees either by individual or group programs is a beginning step in professional development by a given agency.

10. Media. The opportunities for professional development by use of new media are expanding. It is now practical to have devices such as a cassette player in the car or office; radio and T.V. sets in the office, home and motel rooms; telephone conference calls; portable microfiche readers; and programmed modules and units.
11. Leadership roles. Professional development can be enchanced by fulfilling roles on committees, task forces, commissions, associations, and other bodies. Speeches, other presentations, and reports require effort that may be reflected in professional development.
12. Publications. Professional development may be achieved through research for and the writing of a statement for publication. These publications may result from specific seminars, meetings, or other group activities.
13. Peer review. Frequently this method is used for evaluation purposes, but it can be very effective in assisting people at all stages of their careers.
14. Counseling. Counseling assistance and advice may be provided by the supervisor, designated counselors for personnel, or by other persons who may simply be interested or available. Some proprietary agencies offer such services for a fee. This type of activity may be available for a specific program or for a total career.
15. Accrediting organizations. While accrediting organizations have clearly defined evaluation functions, they may also be useful to assist the educators of adults in professional development. For example the experience in the preparation of the institutional self study documents may assist the individual to recognize some inner professional development goals.

16. Testing and profile assessment. Various methods and devices may be sought to evaluate status, aptitudes, interests, and other factors related to Educators of Adults. Assessment may be made by the individual or by other persons or groups. It may also be analyzed and reported by the individual and/or other persons, employees, or sponsors.

Financing Professional Development

In the United States there is no one pattern for financing adult education, and it follows that there is no pattern for financing professional development for educators of adults. Neither are generally accepted guidelines, principles, legislation, or policies available for building a professional development program. There is some feeling that those who benefit should pay. Since society, the employer, the agency, the educators of adults, and other persons and institutions all benefit, the benefit-received criterion is not a firm basis for planning, even if it were accepted. As a result, a matrix of patterns of financing emerges. Some funds may be made available for general purposes and some may be for specific purposes such as payment of registration, conference, seminar, workshop, and other instructional costs, lodging and meals and transportation to and from professional development resources. Many of the funding sources are similar to those available for professional development in other fields and programs. They include:

1. Remitted fees or a reimbursement plan.
2. Leave of absence with or without salary for a period of time. It may also be with or without benefits.
3. Time off during regular working time. It may be for a full day, or several days, or for part of a day for a set period of time.
4. Educational benefits such as fringe benefits, union contract benefits, or payment by arrangement of the sponsor.

5. Grants-in-aid. Funds may be provided by a wide range of agencies.
6. Loans. An individual may borrow money from a bank or other source or in some cases have the loan guaranteed by the government.
7. Fellowships and scholarships. Some scholarships and fellowships are available, but are usually for persons studying on a full-time basis, even if for a short period of time.
8. On-the-job-training. A wide range of opportunities often designed for specific purposes.
9. Foundation grants. Foundations and other non-profit organizations offer a wide array of opportunities often designed for specific purposes.
10. Government funding. The scope in types of funding is considerable and may be direct to an individual or to an agency.
11. Agencies and sponsors. Some agencies provide programs for spouses and dependents as well as for educators of adults.
12. Corporation tax benefits. There are some ways for businesses to deduct for educational programs before paying taxes.
13. Income tax. Some allowances are made for expenses for educational purposes for both volunteers and appointees.
14. Allowances. Some funds may be available to educators of adults for day care; for clerical, secretarial, and technical assistance; for printing and publication; and for books and materials.
15. Membership dues. Some agencies pay membership dues or fees to professional organizations and may pay individual dues of an organization for an employee.
16. Entitlement. Various entitlement plans such as the GI Bill and Veterans' Assistance have been available and others are being proposed.

A number of questions concerning policies and practices should be considered by the individual in the financing of professional development programs:

1. Must the program be job related?
2. Are there limits on the amounts of funds provided, e.g., fixed amounts, matching, or fraction?
3. Must the program result in college credit, degrees, CEU's, or other type of recognition before the funds will be paid?
4. Are the funds given in advance or reimbursed after completion of part of all of the program?
5. Are the funds provided to volunteers as well as to paid appointees?

Recognition and Rewards

Perhaps individuals should be expected to pursue professional development activities out of altruism. Realistically however educators of adults like most other people seek recognition and rewards. In order to achieve them evidence of professional development by the individual is often required.

Many types of recognition and rewards are given for participation in professional development programs. While recognition is desirable and may even be necessary as a product of professional development programs, it may also in itself be a motivating factor. Awards may be very simple or they may be substantial. Some forms include: certificates; credits; bachelor, master and doctoral degrees; Continuing Education Units; recognition dinners and/or events; and status in the community and among peers. They may take the form of career development, upgrading, licensure, promotion, tenure, senority, or salary increases. In a sense, some types of professional development recognition serve as a currency in the field. Recognition is also provided by honors, awards or special designations by professional organizations as well as by other agencies and groups. Personal rewards are often altruistic and result from incentives such as a sense of mission or a desire

for excellence. There is also personal reward for those individuals who learn for the sake of learning, for those who realize a self-actualizing goal, or those who enjoy the stimulus of a challenge.

One should also be aware that there may be punishments for failure to participate in professional development through withholding of promotion, relicensure, or salary increases.

Furthermore, the issue of compulsory participation in or mandatory attendance in professional development programs warrants thoughtful consideration. It poses in arbitrary terms the questions of what is to be the curriculm, the standards, the quality and extent of the continuing professional development program as well as the basic question of who will make the decisions.

The rewards issue often has limitations in that the type of evidence of professional development necessary to receive one reward may not be in keeping with the desired accomplishment of the individual. Individuals or organizations involved in professional development programs should be critically and realistically aware of the implications of rewards. They should be built into the professional development programs.

Evaluation

The evaluation of a professional development program for educators of adults follows the same elements or principles as for any other adult education program. Standards of performance must be clearly and precisely stated. These standards indicate expectation, assess achievement, and enhance morale. The standard of performance to be achieved may be set by the individual, by the agency, by the government or by the professional organization as well as by joint action. These standards may be directly related to a sense of personal satisfaction, as well as to other factors such as admission to membership, promotion, accreditation, tenure, continuing employment, and to licensure.

Evaluation should be based on the objectives; it should involve and be a responsibility of the learner; it should be designed to promote growth and development; it should be regular and continuous; it should be according to selected criteria for evaluation; and it should be shared or reported to agencies and individuals as appropriate.

Evaluation may be considered in terms of productivity which may be expressed in many ways. The professional development program may be assessed through the extent of indirect products such as teaching, research, publication, and income accruing to the institution, or it may be assessed through the quality of all of these and other products.

The difficult task is to relate the objectives to the nature of acceptable products and to both the quality and quantity of the product.

Conclusion or Summary

As indicated at the beginning of this statement, the purpose has been to provide an overview of the professional development of educators of adults. The topics and issues have been introduced and may provide a basis for in-depth consideration. In this way, the educators of adults may become more professionally developed and thus enhance the field of adult education. There is a general need to convince educators of adults, sponsors, employers, government, and others that a commitment to and implementation of professional development plans truly express an investment in adult education.

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